

Encomium for Archpriest Daniel Rentel

July 16, 1939 - February 7, 2023

First Priest of Christ the Savior-Holy Spirit, from 1976-1982

by Joseph Kormos

He never had a blog, podcast, Ancient Faith Radio show, newsletter, or, to our knowledge, held a specific church wide role other than regional dean -- but he was arguably one of Orthodoxy's most influential American priests. The original "influencer".

Whether they realize it or not, every Orthodox Christian parish in America – regardless of jurisdiction - has lost something with his passing. There is at least a small hole in the parish fabric.

The hole is definite in heritage parishes in the mountains of Pennsylvania. They have lost a native son who constantly believed in their strength. Use it.

Small parishes received hope and were told 'be the church' -- no less. They will miss their advocate.

Urban parishes -- have been shown the way-- look to those in need around you – God expects you to love all –in this time, in this place.

Mission parishes – he created the template – start with worship carry it forward with ministry.

Parishes in Southern Ohio have an even bigger hole-- some would say a cavern: St. Gregory's Columbus, where he was the founder priest and pastor for decades, the largest, Dayton, Cincinnati, Byesville. His hand touched them all. He was the 'apostle to the Buckeyes' –state not team.

A lover of culture and customs he was the sworn enemy of those communities who placed culture before the Gospel. Also he disdained ecclesial/parish laziness and stagnancy. We often heard – 'why can't we?'

An 'idea man' also skilled at implementing ... or at least getting things implemented.

He was bi-vocational – a parish priest with a secular job – and showed that could be effective –and physically exhausting. In that way, and numerous others, he challenged the orthodoxy –conventional thinking --while always fully Orthodox. What does it mean to be fully American and fully Orthodox in this land?

Lay persons were trusted and taught to not be suppressed by clericalism. The Church needs your talents, gifts, perspectives. Diocesan efforts to build parish strength - often led by lay persons –have resulted from his urging. Women's roles? Deaconesses? Make a case within the framework – the mind and history - of the Church. Challenge. Be influencers.

A mentor to many – and a friend to even more. He loved people. He loved to discuss - to identify problems- turn them into challenges and then opportunities and possibilities. Finally active efforts.

And, food, hospitality, hugs, babies and much laughter.

May his memory be eternal.